

Defence Blunders Sink Wanderers

By 'SPOT KICK'

Wycombe Wanderers 2; Leytonstone 5

[It all looked so rosy and promising for the Wanderers when Gale shot them into the lead with a spectacular 30-yard drive 13 minutes after the start of the Isthmian League game against Leytonstone on Saturday.

For the home forwards were moving with purpose and precision. The 'link men' were supplying plenty of passes, and the wing partnership of Worley and Gallacher, especially, looked in top form. And the slightly-built Leytonstone forwards were rarely getting beyond the home defensive barrier.

All in all, the Wycombe 4-2-4 formation appeared at last to be slipping effectively into top gear.

TURNING POINT

Even when a bad defensive slip-up allowed the Leytonstone inside-right Ken Gray to level the score after half-an-hour Wycombe confidence was not visibly shaken—for the home forwards were still largely dictating the play and there was little co-ordination in the visitors' counter-attacks.

The real turning-point came a little later when a shot from Tony Horseman, who had looked to be back to something like his old volatile form, was handled out by left-back Wood. Spectators in the best position to judge claimed that the ball had already crossed the line but the referee awarded a penalty. And Thomas shot wide from the spot!

The escape gave Leytonstone a boost to morale which, with another blunder by the unhappy Bunting, soon after the interval, put them in command in the second half and sent Wycombe slithering to disaster.

Centre-forward Dave Hearne's goal off Bunting's shoulder was soon followed by a third from the resourceful Gray, who celebrated his immunity from defensive marking by smacking in a fourth from 25 yards.

It was by no means all Leyton-

stone even in this landslide, but Wycombe lacked their opponents' punch in the middle. There was still too much reliance on Worley, always closely marked, and goalkeeper Griffin rarely looked troubled by the high ball.

Horseman fleetingly revived Wycombe hopes with a goal in something like his old enterprising style — but almost immediately danger man Gray raced away again to shatter the tottering home defence with a fifth.

After the early failures, this straying from a side that could hardly be regarded as top rate, underlined Wycombe defensive weakness and lack of fire-power in attack. And renews doubts about the wisdom of the four-to-four tactics in the middle of team-building.

Wycombe Wanderers—C. Bunting; A. Lewis, J. Beck; G. Pullin, P. Royston, C. Gale; L. Worley, W. Gallacher, D. Thomas, A. Horseman, P. Hodges.

Leytonstone—D. Griffin; L. Wilkinson, R. Wood; R. Hill, J. Allen, D. Clark; B. Yeend, K. Gray, D. Hearne, N. Strover, C. Bristow.